

N E W S R E L E A S E

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In Honor of Veterans Day, All Who Served Our Nation Are Reminded of Priority Access to State's Employment and Training Services

SACRAMENTO – As California and the nation prepare to celebrate Veterans Day, the state Employment Development Department (EDD) renews its commitment to the service men and women returning from war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to all who have served in defense of our nation, by providing quality employment and job training services to those veterans.

“For the EDD family, Veterans Day is not a once a year occasion,” EDD Director Patrick Henning said. “Day in and day out, we give top priority to helping these too-often unsung heroes make a successful transition from the military to good jobs with bright futures in civilian life. It’s the least we can do for the women and men who have gone the extra mile to ensure that America remains the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

“Over the past two years, we have expanded those efforts with 21 ‘Honor a Hero, Hire a Vet’ job and resource fairs held throughout California as part of Governor Schwarzenegger’s Veterans Initiative,” said Henning. “These innovative events have opened up job opportunities for thousands of veterans by providing one-stop access to career, training, and education opportunities. We’ve connected nearly 8,000 veterans with over 1,400 employers and representatives of public and private resource agencies.”

The heart of the EDD veterans program is a statewide network of One-Stop Career Centers stretching from Crescent City to El Centro. Veterans representatives stationed at the centers provide one-on-one counseling and access to a wide variety of services, including labor market information, job referrals, job search workshops, and job development with potential employers.

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The 175-plus members of the EDD veterans staff bring personal commitment, professional skill, and first-hand experience to their work. They have a collective total of more than 1,000 years of military service themselves and more than 2,000 years experience in working with veterans. Since 2002, they have served more than 205,000 veterans and provided in-depth case management services to more than half of them.

In addition, veterans can post their résumés and search for job openings online at CalJOBSSM, EDD's no-cost Internet employment service. Nearly 120,000 veterans enrolled in CalJOBS this year, and EDD's veterans representatives provided intensive services to nearly 23,000 veterans.

California is home to 2 million veterans, the largest number in the nation. For most who are veterans of earlier wars, the employment picture is good: an unemployment rate of 4.1% compared to 4.8% for non-veterans. But it's not so bright for the newest veterans. Last year, the estimated unemployment rate for veterans 20 to 24 years old was 14.3%, up from 12.4% in 2006 and far higher than the 8.8% rate for non-veterans in that age group.

In response to the needs of wounded veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, EDD is participating in the Recovery and Employment Assistance Lifelines program in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor and the Navy Hospital San Diego. Through this REALifelines program, veterans who have been wounded so severely that they cannot return to active duty receive personalized assistance to prepare them for rewarding new civilian careers.

In addition, during this year alone, EDD's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for veterans will help more than 27,000 service men and women and their spouses make a successful transition from military life to civilian jobs. During the past two years, EDD also has expanded its outreach efforts to California National Guard and Reserve troops.

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